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MONDAY, APRIL 19, 1886.

A DELUGE OF FIRE.

The Greatest Conflagration ever Known in Honolulu.

Chinatown Wiped Away.

What has long been feared by some, and considered a certain event by others, has happened. The Chinese quarter of Honolulu has been devastated by a fire, that, gaining headway in the dense aggregation of wooden buildings, was quickly beyond control and sweeping in all directions. Practically all of Chinatown proper has been involved in a sudden and vast conflagration. With its narrow alleys and dark, unwholesome courts and hovels; its picturesque ugliness and interesting Oriental features; its immense traffic, on large and small scales, legitimate and otherwise; its social institutions, of good and bad repute, it has been wiped almost completely off the city plot. A large amount of valuable property belonging to people of the European and Hawaiian races has been obliterated at the same time within and on the borders of Chinatown. Below will be found particulars of this overshadowing event, as full and accurate as possible under the circumstances.

ORIGIN OF THE FIRE.

Yesterday—Sunday, April 18th, 1886—will ever be memorable in the annals of Honolulu for this great fire. A few minutes before 4 o'clock the fire started in a Chinese cook house on the corner of Hotel street and Smith's lane. It was produced accidentally by the owner of the premises in lighting his fire for cooking. Some Chinese ran from the spot, by way of Meek street, toward the Police Station, shouting an alarm. Officer McKeague ordered the Station bell to be rung, which was done with vigor. A general alarm quickly followed from all the engine houses. China Engine Company was the first to reach the scene. At the start a few buckets of water would have quenched the flames, but the Chinese denizens of the neighborhood, in terror of losing their all, paid no attention to the flaming house, but devoted all their activity and energy to saving the contents of their shops and tenements. Although not a breath of wind stirred, the inflammable nature of surrounding buildings invited the flames, and quicker than can be told the fire was leaping from roof to roof, gliding along verandahs, entwining itself about pillars and posts, festooning doors and windows, and darting its fangs into every corner and cranny where a sure hold could be obtained. In the calm the smoke rose in a vast volume, mingled with tongues of flame, high into the air, showing the entire population of the city and suburbs that a formidable fire had started. Both thoroughfares from the starting point were soon lanes of fire, quickly extending themselves into other streets.

PROGRESS OF THE FIRE.

By 5 o'clock the fire had spread along Hotel street near Maunakea, and the fine three-story building of Sun Hang Far Co., corner of Maunakea and Hotel streets, was enveloped in flames. It was evident by this time that the fire was beyond control. The flames from this structure ignited the Hop Chong Market and Hing Kee Laundry on the opposite side of the street, which were soon ablaze. From this corner, it marched steadily forward in opposite directions towards Beretania and King streets, the firemen fighting it at every step, but the odds were against them. Engine No. 1 and the Hose reels of Nos. 1 and 5 were stationed at the corner of Maunakea and King streets. A number of sailors from the British warships in port, happening on shore, went to work and rendered effective service. Hawaii Engine No. 4, with No. 1 Hose reel was stationed at the corner of Beretania and Nuuanu streets, whence a couple of streams were played upon a mass of small wooden buildings to the rear of Love's bakery. Operations at this point were ably conducted by ex-Marshall Parke and Mr. J. A. Hassinger, whose skillful generalship was crowned with success in preventing the fire from reaching Beretania

street in that direction. At the same hour, 5 o'clock, Meek street was blazing on both sides, and the forward march of the flames was making steady progress, being then about half way down towards King street. On Maunakea street, the American House, at 5:20, was a mass of flame. On the opposite side of the street, a couple of warehouses were being rapidly consumed, giving forth a series of loud explosions as the oil and other inflammable stock within were reached by the devouring element. It was becoming more and more evident every minute that unless further progress was soon arrested in this direction, the Kaunakapili church was doomed. Suggestions were urged by the BULLETIN reporters and other spectators to prominent persons supposed to be in authority to make a gap ahead of the fire by demolishing a few of the small buildings on the river side, after which the firemen and other workers would have their hands free to prevent the flames getting hold of a long row of two-story buildings on the Waikiki side and which extended clear back to Beretania opposite the church, but the invariable answer was "I have no authority." At this juncture, His Majesty the King accompanied by Captain Hayley walked round the corner, and at once took in the situation, and gave orders forthwith to tear down the structures referred to, and the job was done. About half an hour later, the tug of war here reached a climax. A body of men on the top and within the building at the end of the row already mentioned, were tearing the fabric to pieces, while the hosemen on the opposite side surrounded by the blistering heat were playing upon the flames with a steady stream. The fire fiend was happily baffled in the struggle, and the conflagration at this point was under control.

All this time, the conflagration was rapidly spreading in other directions. Maunakea, Meek and Nuuanu streets were all but cleaned out, thus putting the pestilential stums and back yards of Chinatown through a most effectual purification. The fire on Nuuanu street had reached the brick and cement building formerly occupied by Hollister & Co., which was now a great burning cauldron within, the flames bursting out round the iron shutters. Next above this building was a vacant lot, and, beyond the gap, Love's bakery. The buildings in rear of the bakery were burned close up by the fire spreading from Smith's lane. King street, by 6 o'clock, presented an awful scene. The flames, having marched down, in three solid, double columns by Maunakea, Meek and Nuuanu streets, raged on both the seaward and mountain sides of King, all the way from Maunakea to Mossman's corner. Great volumes of smoke, in pink, purple, orange, black and yellow rolled skyward, while, in every direction, columns of flame and showers of sparks contributed to the advancing shades of evening a lurid and terrible glare. From the upper rear verandah of the Sailor's Home, a fair view of the whole scene was obtained. The flames from the burning Anchor Saloon rose high in the air; a body of men were at work desperately trying to demolish the building on the corner of Nuuanu and King streets, occupied by Wolfe & Co., grocers, when, on the opposite corner, a dense grey cloud of smoke covered the roof of the Chinese store. The Chinese store was in a few minutes a mass of blazing timbers. Wolfe's store was at once ignited and axemen and others, engaged in tearing it down, were driven off, and the building soon met the fate of the day. Adjoining this was a fine brick building, the Merchant's Exchange, part of which was occupied by the Merchant's Exchange Saloon. Windows, doors and all other removable woodwork were torn out, and flung into the street. By this means, the building was saved, and the adjoining store of Castle & Cooke received but little damage. However, in case of emergency, Messrs. Castle & Cooke had removed all powder and inflammable stock from the premises. The Police Station was now enveloped in flame from the ground to the cupola. The officials had, early in the progress of the fire, removed the prisoners from the premises, as well as all records of value, leaving the stock of opium, confiscated from time to time, to be smoked out by the fire fiend. At precisely 6:57, the bell and cupola tumbled into the blazing debris.

The interior of the Chinese Club House, the grand opening of which was reported in the BULLETIN on the third of February was being licked up by the flames, its iron shutters, this morning presenting a sadly warped and battered appearance. From the Anchor Saloon to the Bethel Vestry, the blaze rose upward in a mighty volume, and was bent over in a threatening manner towards the roof of the Sailors' Home, three stories high. At this stage, the old historic Bethel church around which clustered many sacred associations of the past and the present, was given up for lost. The movables were quickly taken in charge by friendly hands, and by 8:30 o'clock all that was left of this grand landmark in the history of Hawaiian civilization was the bare stone walls of the lower half of the building. On the Bethel and King street corner, the shop occupied by S. M. Johnson as a harness and saddlery store was torn down, and also C. C. Coleman's, blacksmith and machine shop, on the opposite side of King street. The equipments and lease of this shop were advertised to have been sold at auction, to-day. Several buildings had been pulled

down, at other points, during the evening. From the Anchor Saloon, the fire entered the brick and cement store of Wing Wo Tai, and was thence communicated to the large three-story brick building of Wing Wo Chan. With the burning of the Bethel Church and the Wing Wo Tai and Wing Wo Chan buildings, the crisis of the conflagration was reached. It was an hour of terrible suspense. Merchant and Fort streets were in imminent danger. Thirty minutes would decide whether only the Chinese quarters or the whole city of Honolulu would next morning be a weird wilderness of charred and smoking ruins.

The phenomenally perfect calm which had prevailed all the evening now changed to a barely perceptible southwest breeze, turning the flames and flying fragments in the direction of the quarters already hopelessly on fire. Several umbrageous giants, in the rear of the Bethel Church lot, interposed their widespread arms, between the flames and the two-story fabric behind the Post Office on one side of Bethel street, and the Sailors' Home on the other. Connecting sheds were speedily torn down by the British tars with axes and hawser, aided by a body of the household troops, firemen and others. The Wing Wo Chan building, stocked with a ship's cargo of goods, burned internally like the crater of a volcano, while explosions from burning kerosene sounded like discharges from a battery of artillery. Happily for the city, the conflagration did not get across Bethel street or into the Sailors' Home building, and the crisis had passed in safety so far as Fort, Merchant and Queen streets were concerned.

A hard fought battle was maintained for three long hours, up to 9 o'clock, in the vicinity of the Foundry. Only the outbuildings of this establishment were destroyed. Engine No. 1 had secured a position on the dock near the limekiln, making sure of an inexhaustible supply of water, having the Pacific Ocean to draw from.

All this while, the flames were sweeping along King street, on both sides, towards the bridge. At 11:20 precisely, the wall of the last building, on the seaward side, next the bridge, fell in; the second last house directly across the street being then well ignited. These two houses, strange to stay, were saved; and this morning stand, in grim isolation, on the corner of some sixty acres of a black waste of smoking debris.

SCENES AND INCIDENTS.

As the fire advanced along the streets, it was preceded and often overtook an indescribable scene. Through the throng of spectators, the occupants of threatened tenements and shops broke their way, carrying their movable effects to places of safety. Many had wheelbarrows and hand carts; more improvised hand barrows out of doors, blinds, reversed tables, and the like; bulky articles were carried or dragged according to their weight; drays were hurrying after loads or moving away heavily laden; from windows and verandahs household goods were thrown into the streets, often striking with the sound of crashing glass or other fragile material. Above all the roar of the flames and an almost constant fusillade of exploding kerosene, ammunition and fireworks, of one or all of which nearly every shop seemed to carry a large stock.

Down on the Waikahulu stream, from Smith's bridge, an indescribable scene was presented while the flames were still on the conquering march toward Beretania street and the water. The left bank was swarming with natives and Chinese, in the midst of piles of household effects. Men, women and children were wading and swimming back and forth across the stream, propelling every imaginable sort of float, piled with goods or returning after discharging freight on the opposite flats. There were boats, canoes, reversed tables, rafts made of pieces of furniture, and trunks, all employed in the work of salvage. In one case a native lad was seen swimming over, propelling what looked like a kneading trough, with a lively little dog for a passenger. Furniture and utensils were hurled from the top of the bank to those engaged in the ferriage service below, leaving the latter to take all the care of not being struck with the flying chattels. On the large marsh opposite were heaps of effects in numberless array, surrounded by groups, of every age and sex, in a picturesque variety of costumes. The whole formed a scene peculiarly inviting to an artist, but the pencil was never wielded that could adequately transfer it to canvas.

The sandbar and flats at the head of the harbor, toward the Oahu Jail, presented an equally striking picture when the approaching flames drove out the inhabitants of that densely populated region—so recently described, to show up its unsanitary condition, in several of the local papers—between King street and the harbor. In the light of the blazing houses, dimming the radiance of the moon, a numerous array of human faces could be seen regarding with dismay the advancing ruin of their recently sheltering roof trees. These unfortunate people were grouped in canoes and on rafts, with their effects heaped about them and on adjacent canoe stages. There was one pile of three trunks, surmounted by a rocking chair, standing right up out of the water.

NOTES.

Rev. J. A. Cruzan desires it intimated that any white people, burned

out and destitute, will be assured assistance on applying to him at his residence, 196 King street.

The ladies of Fort-street church, assisted by ladies of the Bethel, spread free lunch, with hot coffee, for the people rendered homeless by the fire, in the Vestry of the former church last night. The young men carried similar refreshment to the gallant firemen. Rev. J. A. Cruzan had Fort-street church placed at the disposal of the homeless for shelter. Kaunakapili Church was tendered for a like purpose, while the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Gulick, placed the Immigration Depot at the disposal of the Chinese representatives to house their suffering fellow-countrymen.

All the roads leading out of town were last night teeming with the unfortunates driven out of their homes, some of them having a portion of their household goods with them.

There was a good deal of stealing done, as is usual at large fires everywhere. Some liquor having been appropriated by the mob, a large amount of noise and riot was the result. The number of persons, made homeless by this terrible calamity, is variously stated from 5,000 to 8,000.

THE LOSS.

The following is the valuation of the property destroyed, as given by the assessment books, from which it is inferred that the disaster involves a loss of at least one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000):—

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| Block 18..... | \$150,000 |
| Block 37..... | 95,000 |
| Block 14..... | 80,000 |
| Block 15..... | 165,000 |
| Block 10..... | 450,000 |
| Block 7..... | 135,000 |
| Block 5..... | 130,000 |
| Block 9..... | 150,000 |

Total assessment.....\$1,355,000

INSURANCE.

In the Fireman's Fund Insurance Co., C. R. Bishop & Co., agents, Chinlan & Co. had \$1,000 on a small wooden building that stood next to the Empire Saloon, total loss; Wing Wo Tai & Co., \$1,500 on wooden building and stock that stood between their house and the Bethel Church, total loss. In the Liverpool, London and Globe Insurance Co., Bishop & Co., agents, \$1,000 on Mossman's warehouse; loss about \$500. Total insurance in the firm of C. R. Bishop & Co., \$3,000.

In the Sun Fire Office Insurance Co., of London, G. W. Macfarlane & Co., agents, the Empire Saloon, corner of Nuuanu and Hotel streets, had \$3,500; total loss. Ye Wo Chan & Co., Chinese merchants on Maunakea street, \$2,500; total loss. A small house, 46 Nuuanu street, on International Hotel premises, owned by G. W. Macfarlane & Co., insured for \$400, was completely destroyed. Total insurance in the house of G. W. Macfarlane & Co., \$6,400.

With the Prussian National Insurance Co., H. Reimenschneider, agent, Wolfe & Co., grocers, on corner of Nuuanu and King streets, \$1,500 on stock; total loss. C. Apai, \$1,500 on building that stood corner of King and Maunakea streets, occupied by Quong On Kee and others; total loss. A small house, 44 Nuuanu street, owned by Macfarlane & Co., and occupied by a Chinaman, was insured for \$400; total loss. The full amount of insurance by the Prussian National Co. was \$3,400.

In the South British Co., C. O. Berger, agent, \$8,625. The International, C. O. Berger, agent, \$8,625. The Hartford, C. O. Berger, agent, \$3,750, and the Commercial Insurance Co., C. O. Berger, agent, \$4,000. Total insurance in companies for which C. O. Berger is agent is \$25,000, which is principally divided in small sums among Chinese stores and natives' dwellings, except \$6,000 in the Paiko block, and \$5,500 in the Empire saloon.

In the Commercial Union Insurance Co., of London, A. J. Cartwright, agent, \$4,000 on the Paiko block which will be repaired, damages estimated at about \$2,500. In the Imperial Insurance Co., of London, A. J. Cartwright, agent, \$1,500 on the house of Wing Wo Tai & Co., total loss. Full amount of insurance in companies for which A. J. Cartwright is agent, \$5,500.

In the Trans-Atlantic Co., Hackfeld & Co., agents, \$60,250, and in the North German Co., Hackfeld & Co., agents, \$23,750, making a total of \$84,000 in companies for which Hackfeld & Co. are agents. This \$84,000 is mostly divided into policies, ranging between four and five thousand dollars each, and is entirely on Chinese property, the principal one being Harg On Kee, corner of Hotel and Meek streets, insured for \$10,000, and Wing Chung Lung, Hotel and Maunakea streets, for \$5,000; also Wing On Wo, Maunakea street, for \$5,000, and all are total losses. In the Royal Insurance Co., of Liverpool, W. G. Irwin & Co., agents, \$25,000, and in the Union of New Zealand, Irwin & Co., agents, \$12,000. Total insurance in companies for which Irwin & Co. are agents, \$37,000, which is divided principally among the stone buildings on Nuuanu street.

In the Northern Insurance Co., T. H. Davies & Co., agents, \$7,500, \$6,500 of which was on the brick structure that stood between Castle & Cooke's and Wolfe & Co.'s; the remaining \$1,000 is in small sums in various places. The Hamburg-Bremen Co., F. A. Schaefer & Co., agents, have \$2,000 on the goods of Wing Wo Tai & Co., and \$5,000 on the building they occupied, owned by S. Magnin.

[CONCLUDED ON NEXT PAGE.]

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Just received, 100 pieces of very fine Victoria Lawn at \$2 apiece, 10 yards; a very large assortment of new Spring styles in Lawns, 4-4 Batiste, Satens, plain figured and brocaded, white Pique and a full line of Dress Goods, the latest out.

Lace Boucle, Ladies' Tricot Cloth

in all the new shades; 40 doz Ladies Lisle Thread Hose at 40 cents, the best value ever offered.

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Just received, all the latest styles in Boys and Children's Suits; Great Bargains, Boys Blue Flannel Sailor Suits at \$2.50 a Suit. Just received, direct from Eastern manufacturers,

Ladies', Men's, Misses' and Children's Shoes,

which we offer at bel-rock prices.

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